



MARCH- APRIL 2003

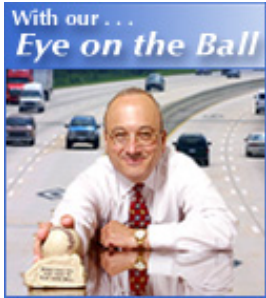
bulletin

THE VDOT ONLINE EMPLOYEE NEWSPAPER

Vol. 69, No. 2



VDOT Supports the troops
— 21 from VDOT
[Click here!](#)



**With our ...
Eye on the Ball**
[Work zone safety:
Awareness through
education](#)

In the News

- [Snow, Sleet, Ice,
etc.](#)
- [Transportation
reform bills signed](#)
- [VDOT wins CVC
awards](#)
- [What's new on the
Web?](#)

Life@VDOT

- [Professional
Engineers Licenses](#)
- [Ideas that Work](#)
- [Eye on the Ball
Award](#)

Taking Care of Business

- [Budget --
Employees suggest
savings](#)
- [Business Decision
Making](#)
- [Route 210 is in the
Green!](#)
- [Project Management
course](#)

Point of View

- [Leadership
Challenge](#)
- [Humor](#)
- [Trivia Quiz](#)
- [50 Years Ago](#)

VDOT People

The Dashboard:

Take a Look Under the Hood



Connie Sorrell, Jill Kocolis, Dale Baker, Kathy Henley, Murali Rao were instrumental in getting the Dashboard up and running.

<<< **The Dashboard had a unique start. Click here to find out how.** >>>

As highway construction season begins...

Work Zone Awareness Week coming

- [Names in the News](#)
- [All in the Family](#)
- [Retirements](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Living Our Values](#)



April 6-12 is time for raising awareness about dangers to highway workers and motorists in work zones.

When you set the clocks forward, it's time to start preaching work zone awareness. VDOT will observe its sixth Work Zone Awareness Week April 6-12 by inviting motorists to take a "safety break" at 38 highway rest areas and by continuing its campaign urging young drivers to "Stay in the Picture".

[<<< Find out more >>>](#)

See Also

- [Work zone safety videos](#)
- [National Work Zone Awareness Week Poster](#)
- [Tech-Bytes article](#)

MARCH- APRIL 2003

bulletin

[Home](#) • [Contact the Editor](#) • [About the Bulletin](#) • [Archives](#) • [Print Version](#)

Life@VDOT

Life@VDOT

P.E. License now
required for many

Ideas at Work

Eye on the Ball

P.E. license now required for many

Pushing up our professionalism

*Department announces engineering positions
designated for elevated professional status*

In the next few days, about 250 engineers across the department will receive letters notifying them that qualifications for the jobs they hold have a new addition: the professional engineer's license.

That licensure-which is usually noted as "P.E." after an engineer's name-was mandated in legislation passed by the Virginia General Assembly in 1992. In effect, the law requires engineers in certain positions in state agencies to meet the same professional standards as a 1979 law required of engineers in the private sector. Agencies were directed to determine which of their engineering positions should require a P.E. to meet the law's demands. VDOT executives, after years of deliberation, have selected those positions, and they are being announced now.

While the demands of the law are clear, considerable leniency is built into the legislation. Unlicensed engineers already at work in 1992 in what would become P.E.-designated positions, were given until June 30, 2010, to renew their engineering knowledge and pass the notoriously rigorous test for the professional license.

Meanwhile, engineers who do not have the P.E. and who were hired after 1992 into positions now designated for P.E. holders will be placed in reporting relationships or new roles that will allow engineering in their units to be the responsibility of a licensed engineer.

In the future, all P.E.-designated positions that become vacant will be advertised with the stipulation that applicants must be licensed engineers.

"The vast number of engineers in P.E. positions already have the license or they are exempt until 2010 because they were in exempted positions in 1992," according to Kerley. Some do not have the license, and some of them are eligible for retirement before the deadline, Kerley explained. If any engineers in designated positions have not obtained their P.E. license or are exempted, the department would look for a way to change their roles or reporting relationships to be in compliance with the law.

The P.E. requirement is raising the bar of professionalism at VDOT, according to Mohammad Mirshahi, state L&D engineer. "It's a milestone in the department's history...it will bring the agency up to a level with other DOTs who require the certification. It is very positive."

At the same time, Mirshahi paid tribute to competent technical people who have contributed so much to the transportation system. "I want to emphasize the important role that people without the P.E. have played in the past and will continue to play. Now, in addition to those competent designers who grew up in the agency, we will have a new generation with technical competence as well as more education and P.E. certification."

*Prep course on target
for engineer's exam*

The challenge of the P.E. exam is daunting, and in the remaining time frame of about seven years, VDOT is intent on helping its engineers leap this high hurdle. Mal Kerley, chief engineer for program development, emphasizes, "The

Within VDOT:
P.E. - Designated Positions**In the District**

District construction engineer, location and design engineer, assistant location and design engineer, structure and bridge engineer, assistant structure and bridge engineer, bridge safety inspections engineer, materials engineer, traffic engineer, and resident engineer. (In Northern Virginia District, four positions are added: preliminary engineer, land development section manager, land development team leader, and traffic engineering assistant.)

In the Central Office

Chief engineer for program development, chief engineer of operations; division administrators for the Construction Management, Location and Design, Materials, Structure and Bridge, Mobility Management, and Scheduling and Contract Development divisions-as well as assistant division administrators in many of these divisions. In those divisions, many architect-engineers I and II are designated as well as the state hydraulics engineer and pavement engineer. In the Right of Way Division, the state utilities engineer is included. At the Research Council, the associate directors and certain research scientists III are included.

**Complete list of jobs in the Central
Office. (PDF)**

department is doing all it can to help non-P.E. engineers obtain their P.E. licenses."

One example is a comprehensive review course in which nine VDOT engineers are now immersed. It is 10 days long, eight or nine hours per day, and taught by Test Masters Educational Services of Houston, Tex. Topics range from hydraulics and hydrology to structures, foundations, and traffic management. Participants in the course reportedly have a pass rate of 85 percent on the first attempt, as compared with a pass rate of 50-60 percent for similar prep courses. The department is giving the nine engineers time off to take the course and is paying their course fee. They expect to have a much sharper edge for the upcoming P.E. exam April 11.

VDOT engineers taking the course have strong motivations for passing the exam, even beyond the obvious compulsion of the P.E. legislation. They also have strong opinions about the effectiveness of the course. Three engineers offer their views below:



Francisco Ortizlandazaba
University of Florida, and came to VDOT in 2000. He also holds a bachelor's in civil engineering from the Gran Colombia University in his native country.

Francisco Ortizlandazaba, geotechnical engineer in the Structure and Bridge Division, is intent on obtaining the P.E., even though his position is not P.E.-designated. He says the license is essential for his work as a specialist in soils and foundations, or "everything that is under ground." And he considers the review course invaluable.

"I'm not required to have the P.E., but I definitely need it," Ortizlandazaba states. "If I don't have it, I cannot validate my designs or reviews of designs, or present solutions that others might consider appropriate. Even in court, without the P.E., my expertise is not as authoritative."

For an engineer, not having a P.E. is "like going to school, taking all the courses, and never getting the diploma," asserts Ortizlandazaba who emigrated to the U.S. from Bogota, Colombia, in 1998. He learned English in a crash course, earned a master's degree in engineering from the

"There is an immense amount of material in civil engineering, and they narrow the material down to the most relevant topics." —

Francisco Ortizlandazaba

Civil engineering is "an extremely broad field — just one branch of it is a huge area to cover," and that's why, he says, the exam is so difficult and the review course so needful.

"There is an immense amount of material in civil engineering, and they narrow the material down to the most relevant topics. Otherwise, you don't know what to cover, and it would take years to become an expert in every branch. Still, there is so much material," he observes. The course is an excellent preparation for anyone, he adds, because it gives you test-taking strategies, a range of the type of problems on the test, and advice to budget your test-taking time.

Another advantage is being in class with VDOT's own experts in various branches of engineering. "By being in class together we share our expertise-many times. It's a mutual advantage," Ortizlandazaba says.

Bart Thrasher, engineer senior, L &D division in Central Office, holds a P.E. designated position, but says, "I would take the exam regardless" of whether the P.E. was a requirement. "It's the next step. It's like a doctor taking the medical boards or a lawyer passing the bar exam."

"I would take the exam regardless" of whether the P.E. was a requirement.

— **Bart Thrasher**

He adds, "Outside VDOT, you must have an engineer stamp with his seal that a new bridge or road has been designed by a professional engineer. Until now, we haven't done that in the department."

Thrasher, who heads an engineering coordinating section for three VDOT districts, instigated VDOT's sponsorship of the review course. He first learned about the Test Masters course in February when a brochure came to his desk. He suggested it to Mohammad Mirshahi, L&D division administrator, who supported a VDOT-sponsored course. So Thrasher presented the idea to the VDOT Learning Center where Carole Gardner, manager, went right to work on it. "Carole really pushed this through. I take my hat off to her." He also credited Sue Watson, Central Office training section, and Melanie Joyner, Associate Engineer Program manager.



Bart Thrasher
and Melanie Joyner, Associate Engineer Program manager.

Thrasher took an in-state review course earlier, found that instructors had not kept up with changes in the exam or in the engineering codes and regretted that their review was too relaxed. "There's no comparison between this course and the previous course," he asserts, because the Tech Masters instructors are current in the field and demanding. "For eight or nine hours a day you're working problems, and then you're working problems at night at home."

Gary Martin, assistant bridge engineer in Richmond District, says "I would recommend this course to anyone. I tried a home study course and it was a waste of time. Unfortunately I lost two months of study time because of it. This course is a dream come true."



Gary Martin

A 29-year veteran of VDOT, Martin has a combination of education and engineering experience that allows him to sit for the exam for the P.E. license, which is now required in his position. Although Martin could retire in a few years, he wants to pursue the P.E. "I am doing this more for my own self-satisfaction than to meet the requirement." He also acknowledges that he cannot advance in the department or in the field without it.

"Very intensive" is the way Martin describes the course. For VDOT engineers, the course was presented in two sessions of seven consecutive days followed in a week by another session of three consecutive days. And, of course, lots of homework with lots of problems to work at night.

"I am doing this more for my own self-satisfaction than to meet the requirement."

— Gary Martin

[^ top](#)

MARCH- APRIL 2003

bulletin

[Home](#) • [Contact the Editor](#) • [About the Bulletin](#) • [Archives](#) • [Print Version](#)

Work zone safety:

Awareness through education

We're in a serious business. We're in a dangerous business. All of that seriousness and all of that danger comes together in construction work zones. A work zone is a busy intersection of moving equipment, stockpiled materials, and our most precious resource — people. Unfortunately, not all drivers associate construction — despite the signs, striping, barrels and cones — with driving safely.

"Remember, when we talk about protecting people in work zones, we're talking about saving lives."

Recently, motorists participating in a national study said they ignore work zone warning signs, disregard workers' safety, and drive too fast in work zones. So, even though we take extra care to clearly mark work zones, we have to do more. Even the threat of doubled fines isn't enough to do the trick.

So, what's the missing link? Education. We have to make good use of every opportunity we get to educate drivers, especially teenagers who are about to become drivers.

VDOT has worked extensively with Virginia driver's education teachers over the past two years, and we're going to continue that effort. Folks in our Mobility Management and Public Affairs Divisions staff, along with contractors, have gone to schools, created work zone safety curriculums, and partnered with State Police all for the purpose of reaching out to new drivers and helping them better understand the importance of safety

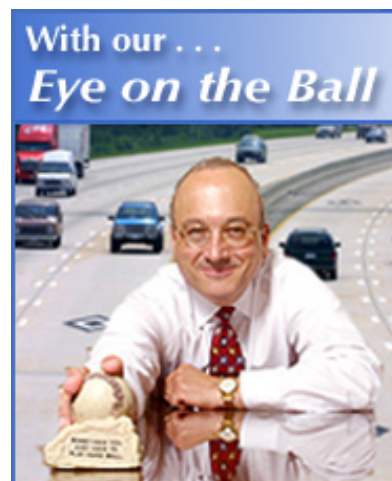
when driving through work zones.

Remember, when we talk about protecting people in work zones, we're talking about saving lives. Make no mistake. Risks abound in work zones. One of the most important things we can do to eliminate and manage them is to be aware of them. And awareness begins with education.

Do your part. We want you to come out of that work zone each day so you can return safe and sound to your family.

Safety first. It's not just a value. It's a requirement.

Philip



View the commissioner's message in MPG format (MPG, 6.38MB, 2:06) >

Play Video

[^ top](#)

In the News

Snow, rain, sleet — they all ganged up and beat up the roads!



Donnie Sherlin holds a spreader as Tim Walker compacts and patches (yet another) pothole.

After a string of mild winters, a spate of storms besieged Virginia from the middle of February into March.

With heavy snows in the Shenandoah Valley and Northern Virginia, a messy mix of snow and sleet over most of Central Virginia, and flooding in the state's Southwest counties, VDOT crews were spending more time in their trucks than in their beds. On Feb. 22, after one of the heaviest accumulations, more than 500 secondary roads and 15 primary roads were closed.

When the snow and rain slacked, Gov. Mark Warner sounded the charge for a road-repairing "blitz." VDOT and its contractors immediately began working 24/7 to repair a bumper crop of potholes serious enough on some highways to crack vehicle axles. At the same time, VDOT maintained its spring paving schedule.

Costs of snow removal and flood repairs were expected to reach \$140 million, compared with a budget of \$48 million for snow removal and \$16 million for emergencies such as flooding. Pothole repairs, which are budgeted at \$11 million for the year, are expected to amount to \$22 million. In addition, the normal cost of \$25 million for spring repaving will be significantly higher. State officials were waiting to see if the hardest hit areas qualified for federal disaster assistance.

VDOT employees and contractors attacked potholes with solid resolve, repairing about 95,000 potholes during their two-week campaign. It takes 30 minutes to an hour to patch an average asphalt pothole and nearly three hours to patch a concrete pothole. Governor Warner stated subsequently, "I am very pleased with the results that nearly 100 percent of the potholes caused by the winter storms and flooding have been repaired across the state."

Highway Helpers —



William Wright

The hard work to restore Virginia's roads after winter storms is being done by people like William Wright and Cassell Hamlette. They are members of a Tiger Team from Appomattox Residency that was dispatched to Sandston Residency, where potholes are plentiful.

Wright, supervisor at Timberlake AHQ, said, "We're here as long as they need us." His team is helping out by working 12- and 13-hour days alongside Sandston crews. Techniques for road repair differ between residencies, Wright noted, but he said, "We've learned to get together and work through any differences." He's a 24-year VDOT veteran who has been at Timberlake since 1996.

Hamlette, a transportation operator II, is from Appomattox AHQ and has 11 years of experience. He was definite about his mission: "My job is to provide for the public a good highway to drive on. Any day, anywhere, I'm willing to go help fix the roads." And if you watch Hamlette attack potholes with a jackhammer, you know he means what he

says.



Cassell Hamlette

In the News

**Snow, Sleet, Ice,
etc.**

CVC presentations

**Governor signs
VDOT reform
legislation**

**What's new on the
Web?**

In the News

Governor signs VDOT reform legislation



Gov. Mark R. Warner has signed legislation to assist VDOT in delivering transportation projects on time and on budget, while emphasizing affordable, innovative solutions to transportation problems.

"We are here to launch new tools that will help ensure VDOT earns the public's trust and spends tax dollars wisely," the Governor said at the March 18 signing ceremony at the Springfield Interchange Project.

The legislative package requires a detailed financial plan for all projects in excess of \$100 million as well as:

- a complete cost estimate for all major project elements;
- an implementation plan with the project schedule and cost-to-complete information presented for each year;
- identified revenues by funding source available each year to meet project costs;
- a detailed cash flow analysis for each year of the proposed project; and
- quarterly reports to the public and the General Assembly on the current status of every highway construction project, including up-to-date cost and schedule information on every project. (VDOT's recently unveiled "Dashboard" now provides detailed project information to the public. See related stories on the home page of this Bulletin edition.)

The legislation also specifies greater accountability and financial management for the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) and VDOT by requiring that:

- the CTB adopt the Six-Year Program by July 1 each year;
- the CTB use the most recent independent transportation trust fund and general fund revenue estimates;
- the Six-Year Program be consistent with an adopted debt management policy; and
- enables technical assistance by VDOT to local governments in developing comprehensive transportation plans;

Other legislation signed includes the innovative Rural Rustic Roads program, a first option for counties with qualifying roads. Pilot efforts have shown that significant financial savings can be generated through use of the "pave in place" program, which gives greater flexibility when paving certain rural roads along their existing alignments. In Augusta County, six projects were completed under the Rural Rustic Roads program resulting in 7.85 miles of paved road for \$405,207. The original cost estimate for the projects was almost \$3.5 million.

Also passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor was legislation to:

- increase the maximum for speeding in highway work zones from \$250 to \$500;
- provide fines of no less than \$200 and no more than \$500 for motor vehicle offenses on primary and interstate highways, which will be designated as "Highway Safety Corridors";
- increase the amounts that can be approved by the Commissioner (rather than the CTB) for maintenance contracts from \$250,000 to \$2 million and allows the Commissioner to approve construction contracts costing up to \$2 million (previously all construction was approved by the CTB);
- allows municipalities to enter into agreements with VDOT to delegate authority to local governments to award contracts for the construction and improvement of streets of the municipalities, using funds allocated by the CTB;

In the News

**Snow, Sleet, Ice,
etc.**

CVC presentations

**Governor signs
VDOT reform
legislation**

**What's new on the
Web?**

- transfer of the responsibility for issuing hauling permits from VDOT to DMV; and
- provide equitable interest on certain obligations of VDOT to owners of property acquired through condemnation proceedings.

[^ top](#)

MARCH- APRIL 2003

bulletin

[Home](#) • [Contact the Editor](#) • [About the Bulletin](#) • [Archives](#) • [Print Version](#)

In the News

CVC efforts bring awards for VDOT

Even though VDOT employees were contemplating an uncertain economy during last year's Combined Virginia Campaign, they still increased giving to the campaign by \$3,000, raising \$217,253 statewide.

Anne Dinterman, campaign chairman for VDOT, noted that VDOT had raised 95 percent of its goal, which is the "highest dollar amount VDOT has ever raised for a campaign." That amount was an increase of one percent in dollars raised over last year. "It was a successful campaign in spite of lean times. Other agencies had difficulty raising even 80 percent of their goals," Dinterman added.

The department collected several awards for the campaign including a special award for increasing the dollar amount raised. The University of Virginia was the only other large state agency to receive the award.

Four VDOT districts were given special awards for meeting or exceeding their goals. They were Richmond (117 percent of goal), Hampton Roads (106), Salem (102), and Lynchburg (100). The Central Office also earned a Silver Award for leadership in the campaign.

In the News

[Snow, Sleet, Ice,
etc.](#)

[CVC presentations](#)

[Governor signs
VDOT reform
legislation](#)

[What's new on the
Web?](#)



Receiving CVC awards on behalf of VDOT are (front row, from left) Brenda Kilgore and Joseph Hayes (second row) Earl Newby, Lillian Bobbitt, Susan Archer, Dot Johnson, Jane Wimbush, John Neal, Ruby Evans, Phyllis Austin, Welton Blount, and Sarah Wilson, director of the Department of Human Resource Management (back row) Connie Sorrell, Almeater Alston, Faye Harris, Anne Dinterman, Paula Wilder, and John Neal.

[^ top](#)

In the News

What's new on the Web?

While perusing this issue of the Bulletin, take a minute to check out what's new on VDOT's Web site [VirginiaDOT.org](#). See how the [Dashboard](#) works, take a drive along [Route 58](#), and see if you can answer the [Did you know?](#) quiz this month. If you are a VDOT employee or business partner, you might be interested in VDOT's training for the new [Federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices \(MUTCD\)](#). If you are a [planner](#), you now have a one-stop shopping place to go for frequently asking questions, and references for planning issues.

Commuters and travelers alike will appreciate our new and improved way for accessing [travel advisories](#). Now, you can search VDOT's database by region, city or county and/or by Interstate. Instead of having to hunt for traffic information by district, you can click on the region of interest, and check a travel route such as I-95 or I-81 across the entire state.

Two new pages added to the site include one on [technology-related information](#) and one on [resources for researchers](#). Technology highlighted includes Smart Traffic Centers that are currently being featured on the home page as well. Researchers will find links to the [Virginia Transportation Research Council](#).

[^ top](#)

In the News

**Snow, Sleet, Ice,
etc.**

CVC presentations

**Governor signs
VDOT reform
legislation**

**What's new on the
Web?**

Life@VDOT

Life@VDOT

P.E. License now
required for many

Ideas at Work

Eye on the Ball

Ideas at Work

Employees reap nice rewards

Two employees reaped sizable rewards for ideas submitted to VDOT's Ideas at Work Program recently.



Darryl Whittemore is presented with a check for his suggestion on reducing overtime pay

specifications about when epoxy should be applied to recently poured bridge-deck overlays. Her suggestion was that the manufacturer's recommendation of a 28-day cure time for overlays be stated in VDOT's Road and Bridge Specifications. After several experts across the state concurred, the recommendation was accepted. Her idea will mean better bridges for motorists and 36 hours of extra vacation time for her.

For more information on VDOT's employee suggestion program, called "Ideas at Work," click on <http://coprodproj/ideasatwork/Default.asp> . For information on the Commonwealth's Employee Suggestion Program, go to <http://www.dhrm.state.va.us/>.

Darryl Whittemore, a traffic controller at the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, suggested that "in person" briefings of supervisors going on duty by supervisors going off duty could be eliminated to save overtime pay. Supervisors staying after their eight-hour shift to give a briefing were being paid for each minute of overtime, as labor laws require. Whittemore suggested using a "pass-down log" in which supervisors going off duty record information the next shift needs to know for efficient tunnel operations.

Whittemore's suggestion was implemented, reducing overtime and saving VDOT \$7,191 over the course of the first year. For that savings, he was presented a check for \$1,257.

Norie Smith, a construction inspector senior, observed that bridge repair contractors had no guidelines from VDOT



Norie Smith

^ [top](#)

Life@VDOT

Commissioner Shucet has baseballs... WHO's got a mitt?

Life@VDOT

**P.E. License now
required for many**

Ideas at Work

Eye on the Ball



Emily Elliott (left) and Kellie Bonner (right) pitched the idea and became the first recipients of Commissioner Shucet's (center) "Eye on the Ball" award.

Employees with their "eye on the ball" might just get to catch one from Commissioner Philip Shucet.

The Commissioner has started a season-long program to recognize VDOTers who play well by his motto of "keep your eye on the ball," which means staying focused on the department's goals and deadlines.

The Commissioner has been scouting employees who are really into the game, and to those he will present a Spalding baseball with his autograph on it. The ball will be a memento of the employee's achievement, and who knows, eventually it might be as valuable as a ball signed by the '56 Yankees.

The program started in February, and the first two employees to receive a baseball were [Kellie Bonner](#), agency recognition coordinator, and [Emily Elliott](#), compensation initiatives manager, both of the Human Resources Division. They were honored because they had proposed the concept of the baseball recognition program to the Commissioner, who signed on to it enthusiastically. Recently, as they were waiting in his office to watch the first presentation of baseballs, the Commissioner said he was going to get unidentified honorees and bring them to his office. After a few minutes, he returned and presented the first two balls to Bonner and Elliott — who had no idea that they would be the first ones honored.

The program was conceived recently as the two HR professionals were pitching ideas to each other for a recognition program. "Somehow we got around to the fact that the Commissioner is big on 'keeping your eye on the ball.'" One thing led to another, and we came up with the idea of providing the Commissioner with a box of baseballs that he could sign and pass out to employees as a form of recognition," Elliott said.

The Commissioner has been presenting baseballs during his recent visits around the state. So "heads up!" — you might be fielding the next one.

[^ top](#)

Taking Care of Business

Core construction and maintenance escape reductions
Legislators agree to VDOT budget cuts

Budget cuts proposed by VDOT last fall and incorporated into the Governor's Budget Bill were passed by the General Assembly without amendments during the recent legislative session.

Core construction and maintenance programs will not be cut, but administrative and programmatic reductions for VDOT will equal \$25.7 million for the current fiscal year ending June 30. That amount will be cut from the original state budget of \$2.9 billion.

VDOT administrative reductions for upcoming fiscal year (from July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004) will amount to \$37 million. The

total proposed state budget for VDOT is \$3.015 billion.

Specific cuts over the next two years include discontinuing the consultant contract for the Inventory and Condition Assessment System (ICAS), which involved collecting information statewide on Virginia's transportation facilities (\$11.8 million in savings). Cuts also include reduced funding for the traffic management system (\$5.7 million), scaling back the safety service patrols to peak periods (\$6 million), and eliminating 100 positions through turnovers and vacancies (\$6.9 million).

Also reflected in the budget are reduced in-house information technology activities in anticipation of a statewide reform initiative in that area (\$9.4 million in FY 04).

Whittling away at administrative budgets throughout the department has been a priority, too, especially by identifying discretionary spending on items not essential to day-to-day operations. This will include management reviews of pagers, cell phones, and telephone lines. Non-essential activities, training, and planned overtime also will be scrutinized. Printing documents in-house (on both sides of sheets) is emphasized. A major example is discontinuing outside printing of the VDOT Bulletin, now available online and via e-mail. Employees without access receive copies printed in house.

Employee suggestions reduce spending

Last August, while state government faced precipitous revenue short falls, Commissioner Philip Shucet invited VDOT employees to suggest cost-saving measures to reduce the department's budget to meet the Governor's requirements.

VDOTers subsequently made more than 500 suggestions, and administrators and budget analysts reviewed them carefully in making budget reduction plans submitted to the Governor. Suggestions implemented included reductions in cleaning services, clerical and other temporary employee support, travel and lodging, and the earlier publicized change of color for VDOT trucks from orange to white. Reducing or delaying equipment purchases and shifting the Safety Service Patrol services to peak periods were also employee suggestions implemented.

Two suggestions — renegotiating the "seat management" contract for personal computers and reducing the agency's reliance on technology consultants — will result in cost savings of \$1.4 million in fiscal year 2003 and \$2.6 million in fiscal year 2004. Total cost savings from employee suggestions were estimated at \$36.8 million.

The commissioner told employees that he will "continue to look at your ideas, and I expect that we will make changes as a result.

Taking Care of Business



**Budget --
Employees suggest
savings**

**Business Decision
Making**

Route 210 is All Green!

**Project Management
course**

However, determining the impact of and making sure the idea and suggestion will have the intended result takes time to determine."



Taking Care of Business

New intranet site lets you review decision cases...

Business Decision Making process having impact

Do you and your team sometimes struggle (or get stuck) when making a decision? Could you benefit from learning a systematic process for making decisions?

Implemented a year ago, the Business Decision Making (BDM) process is making a noticeable impact on how the department's decisions are made. In BDM workshops, decision makers are reasoning their way through everyday VDOT business decisions using BDM's clear, deliberative approach. Those decisions concern actual operations — such as whether to contract out a mowing operation or not.

Tom Ramey, Lynchburg District administrator and a BDM champion, has high praise for BDM: "Our folks in Appomattox Residency used the BDM process to decide how they would improve the safety and traffic-carrying capacity of a local route. Frankly, I don't know that they would have come to the same conclusion, had they not gone through the BDM process. But what's even better is that through this process they were able to identify a potential savings of \$537,000!"

But even if you have not taken a workshop, you can still benefit from decision cases conducted during the workshops by accessing a new VDOT intranet site devoted to BDM. You can view the case from Appomattox and follow the course of other decisions being made. To access cases and to find out more about BDM, click on <http://501spider/bdm/>. BDM is under "What's New?" on the Central Office home page. Please be aware that cases are not posted for viewers to make the same decision as workshop participants because criteria for decisions can vary.

If you would like to consider using the process on a pending decision or you would like to learn more about the BDM process, contact your local BDM champion or training manager (see "contacts" on the website) if you work in a district, or contact [Brooke Mullery](#) at Brooke.Mullery@Virginia.DOT.org if you work in the Central Office.

[^ top](#)

Taking Care of Business



**Budget --
Employees suggest
savings**

**Business Decision
Making**

Route 210 is All Green!

**Project Management
course**

Taking Care of Business



The DASHBOARD SHOWS: ROUTE 210 CONNECTOR IN LYNCHBURG IS... All GREEN...

Project:

Route 210 Connector, Lynchburg-Madison Heights Bypass, four lanes, in Amherst County

Current Contract Amount:

\$8.86 million (Award amount--\$8.7 million)

Completion Date:

July 1, 2004 (current and specified)

Contractor:

Haymes Brothers



Route 210 Connector team (from left, front row): Tim Clark, VDOT inspector trainee; Deborah Ellis, consultant inspector, A. Morton Thomas and Assocs. (AMT); Roy Isaacs, foreman, Haymes Bros.; (back row) Steve Jones, consultant inspector with AMT; Gary Tuggle, superintendent, Haymes Bros.; Wayne Kidd, consultant inspector with Professional Consulting Services; Brian Woodford, VDOT project inspector. Pictured inset is Tamara Jackson, VDOT inspector. Not shown is Chuck Haymes, project manager, Haymes Bros.

and the contractor's staff, reports McCormack. To "start right and stay right," the contractor, project engineer Clayton Thomas, and project inspector Walter Lewis established a good working relationship at project's beginning. Senior inspector Brian Woodford stepped in as project inspector in October 2002 when Lewis was called to active duty with the Army National Guard. "From my first day on the project, I could see the team work among the inspectors and contractor personnel, and I knew that that was the reason for the success of the project," says Woodford.

What's Working?

"This job is going well because of the informal partnering being practiced, which has greatly enhanced communication and problem resolution at the project level." — Mike McCormack, project manager.

Keep up the good work! That's the word McCormack has for the team at work on the Route 210 connector on the Lynchburg-Madison Heights Bypass in Amherst County. Their project is showing all "green" on the traffic light icon on VDOT's Dashboard.



Lewis

The success of this project is directly related to the cooperation of the team, which is composed of VDOT employees, consultant inspectors,

Taking Care of Business



**Budget --
Employees suggest
savings**

**Business Decision
Making**

Route 210 is All Green!

**Project Management
course**

^ top

Taking Care of Business

VDOTers complete first phase of project management training

Nineteen employees have received certificates for completing the first level of a Project Management Professional Development Program (PMPDP). The program, designed especially for transportation professionals, is offered by George Washington University and ESI International, a worldwide leader in project management training. Participants come from a cross-section of Central Office divisions and district offices.



Recipients of the associate's certificate in project management are (from left, seated) Joseph Coleman, Emily Peter, Rebecca Behringer, Emmanuel Darko; (second row) Steve Kindy, Bob Boothe, Shailendra Patel, Sam Hayes, Gene Martin, Sidonia Detmer, instructor Mike Petko, Mal Kerley, chief engineer for program development who awarded the certificates; (third row) Marvin Tart, Robert Scott, Kendel Walus, Jeffrey Cutright, David Schneider, Palmer Stearns, Mark White, Jonathan Steele, and Richard Waiton.

professional path for those who do not align themselves with the first two paths.

VDOT encouraged employees to take the program in keeping with its commitment to deliver construction projects on time and on budget. The program is designed to integrate management principles into the way participants plan and execute their assignments. PMPDP has three levels of achievement and three curriculum paths.

VDOTers who recently completed Level I of the program received an associate's certificate in project management. Completion of Level II entitles participants to receive a master's certificate, and completion of Level III grants them a Project Management Professional (PMP) certification. The three curriculum paths are information technology, program development and operations, and a

Taking Care of Business



**Budget --
Employees suggest
savings**

**Business Decision
Making**

Route 210 is All Green!

**Project Management
course**

Steps to becoming a project management professional

Level Three:

Project Management Professional (PMP) Certification

Level Two:

Master's Certificate in Project Management

Level One:

Associate's Certificate in Project Management

For more information on the program, contact [Winston Phillips](mailto:Winston.Phillips@VirginiaDot.org) at COMSDProjectManagement@VirginiaDot.org



[^ top](#)

MARCH- APRIL 2003

bulletin

[Home](#) • [Contact the Editor](#) • [About the Bulletin](#) • [Archives](#) • [Print Version](#)

Point of View



Leadership Challenge

Time and training no longer wait for us

By Frank Gee, P.E., chief engineer of operations

Someone once said, "It isn't what you know but what you are willing to learn." In today's world, that small sentence represents a large truth.

Recently I passed the exam for the Virginia Professional Engineer's (P.E.) license. I'm glad about that, but wish I'd been more determined years ago to follow the truth mentioned above. Professional development wasn't as great a priority to me back then, and I made some decisions that hindered both my personal and professional progress, decisions I've regretted but have been able to reverse. I would like to share a few of those decisions, and by sharing them I hope to persuade you to pursue professional development more intentionally than I did.

While in college I took the certified land surveyor's exam for North Carolina as part of a class, and I passed it; but I didn't continue to obtain the experience that would have allowed me eventually to get the license. I also was ready in college to take the Engineer in Training exam, but busyness with extracurricular activities made me think I didn't have time for it. As I reflect on these decisions, I realize they were made only looking at immediate short-term issues and not the future.

After working for VDOT for several years, some enticing offers from industry came my way. But I needed the Engineer in Training accreditation and the P.E., so I began to study for them. Later, after careful thought, I decided to stay in the public sphere, and at that time saw no need to continue studies for the P.E. I am happy that I decided to remain in the public sector, but I regret not finishing what I had started. In 1994, legislation was passed to require many VDOT engineers to obtain P.E certification, and I have since obtained it. But if I had earned certification earlier, it would have enhanced my knowledge and my career. In light of that, I urge all of you to not put off until tomorrow what you can do today.

A commitment to lifelong learning would have been a good (and wise) thing when I began my career; but today, and in the future, it is paramount.

Of course we must attend to quality work, budgets, deadlines, and issues that come up; but the best outcomes for our work are related to gaining new knowledge. Leaving things better for the next generation is dependent on our learning and growing while we are at work. In that regard, I want to thank Jack Hodge, Jamie Browder, and Claude Garver for pushing me toward professional development.

Fortunately, all of us in the department are being given opportunities to learn. However, it's good to remember that we commit to learning as individuals, and that this learning organization of VDOT is made up of individuals.

That's not all. We all want to be happy, and a verse from Proverbs (3:13) tells how that can come about: "Happy is the man that finds wisdom, and the man that gets understanding." Today's application of this ancient writer's words is that we stay in action by seeking knowledge, taking training, and gaining professional certifications-regardless of the field we work in. I firmly believe that to be effective we must recognize the need for learning and growing.

Learn and grow. That's a good way to be productive and happy. It's also the primary way to make our destiny a matter of choice rather than chance.

[^ top](#)

Point of View

[Leadership Challenge](#)

[50 Years Ago](#)

[Answer File](#)

[Humor](#)

Point of View

Humor

It's always close to the center-line (the heart) of VDOT

[Ryan Hall](#), Public Affairs Office, Northern Virginia District, e-mailed the following, which he cites as an example of "the humorous to bizarre" queries he receives from citizens:

"I took a call the other day from a woman driving onto I-395 from the HOV lanes. She called in a panic because a large duck or goose almost hit her car. She wanted to know what VDOT was going to do to prevent such occurrences in the future. My response was to ask if she had any suggestions because I just could not think of anything, short of changing the migratory habits of water fowl."

We assume Ryan is still working on this one.

If you have a humorous, VDOT-related story, send it to the editor, Public Affairs, Central Office, or e-mail it to Chuck.Armstrong@VirginiaDOT.org

Point of View

[Leadership Challenge](#)[50 Years Ago](#)[Answer File](#)[Humor](#)[^ top](#)

Point of View

Answer File

Q. What is the longest highway in Virginia?

- Route 460
- I-81
- Route 58

Point of View

Leadership Challenge

50 Years Ago

Answer File

Humor

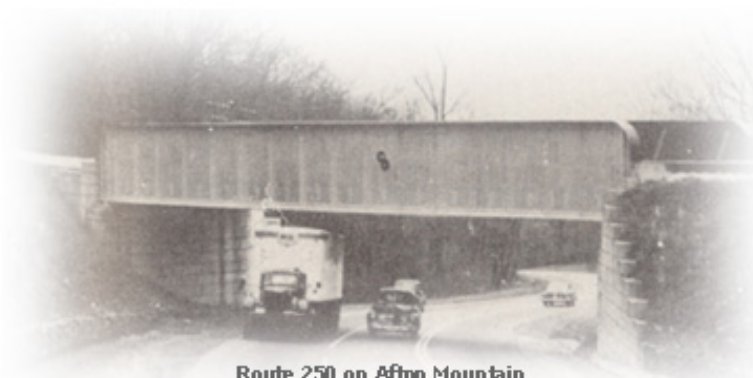
^ top

Point of View

50 Years ago

'Truck' lanes introduced

Some transportation issues never die, they just come back and vex the next generation. One of the great challenges to highway engineers 50 years ago is awfully similar to one of today's: What to do with trucking? A major solution five decades ago was reported in the March 1953 Highway Bulletin. It was termed the "truck" or "climbing" lane.



Route 250 on Afton Mountain

Point of View

[Leadership Challenge](#)
[50 Years Ago](#)
[Answer File](#)
[Humor](#)

Virginia had begun building an extra lane, or "truck lane," on two-lane highways where large numbers of trucks were ascending sustained grades or where a combination of steep grades and poor alignments hindered traffic flow. Here's how H.R. Perkinson Jr., associate traffic engineer, described the innovative engineering feature:

"Highways with truck lanes are clearly marked with pavement lines and regulatory signs to allot two definite lanes to upgrade traffic, with the heavy, slow-moving vehicles being directed to use the right, or outside, lane. As traffic moves downgrade at relatively uniform speeds, all vehicles are funneled into a single lane by standard barrier markings near the crest of the grade."

The effects of truck lane installations? The Bulletin reported that a new truck lane on Route 220 north of Rocky Mount had eliminated about 95 percent of the congestion there. A new truck lane on Route 11 over Alleghany Mountain now carries "over 6,000 vehicles a day with minimum congestion" (no earlier count given for a comparison of before and after). And a truck lane on Route 250 on the east side of Afton Mountain "enables motorists to cross the Blue Ridge at normal operating speeds."

As well as moving traffic more efficiently, the truck lanes also had "practically eliminated" accidents resulting from passing maneuvers caused by slow-moving vehicles, according to Mr. Perkinson.

[^ top](#)

*Under the hood***Dashboard drivers toil behind the scenes**

Connie Sorrell, Jill Kocolis, Dale Baker, Kathy Henley, Murali Rao were instrumental in getting the Dashboard up and running.
conceived.

You've heard of great ideas being drawn up on the back of a napkin, and that is exactly how the Dashboard went from concept to reality. At the Spring Leadership Conference a year ago, Commissioner Philip Shucet challenged Gary Allen, director of technology, research and innovation; Frank Gee, chief engineer for operations; and Murali Rao, information technology applications director; to think of a simple way to track project status. Allen proposed a potential car dashboard view of some prime indicators of the construction program. About a week after that conversation, Rao had a prototype ready to go.

"We literally scratched ideas on the back of a napkin a year ago," Rao said. "We came up with a dashboard that would have three levels — the highest for management, the second for line-by-line items, and the lowest with more details of the project history. That shell has remained the same. It has matured over time, and we've added bells and whistles, but the original concept is the same."

The Dashboard is an online, one-stop information source for project status. VDOT made this internal management tool available for the public to see earlier this month, less than a year after the program was

The Dashboard monitors projects that are ready to go to construction and projects that are under construction. It indicates the latest status on budgets, schedules and work orders by using the red, yellow and green colors of a traffic signal.

Rao is one of a handful of key players who became involved in the Dashboard very early on in the process. Connie Sorrell, chief of policy and organizational development, was tasked with heading up a Dashboard Council; Kathy Henley, software processes manager, is the project coordinator; Jill Kocolis, database analyst, handled data management; Rob Walters was the designer/Web programmer; and Dale Baker, policy and planning specialist, handled training and business aspects of the project.

In addition to this core group, there have been a number of other people who have had a role in the success of the Dashboard.

"There are really too many people to mention by name," Baker said. "But Rob Walters and Garrett Vlieger (in Information Technology Applications) are two who deserve recognition. They applied the new technology that makes the Dashboard work."

Kocolis added that the team relied heavily on the data custodians -- Sidonia Detmer, engineer manager, for the Program Project Management System (PPMS) and Dennis Motley, contract administrator engineer, for TRNS-PORT (a software system that monitors construction contracts).

"The data was already in the warehouse," Kocolis said. "It was available in PPMS and in TRNS-PORT. Our biggest task was in development and testing. There was a huge learning curve for the users. They would see their project in the Dashboard and say, 'I need to fix that.' And they would have to go back to PPMS to make a change."

Rao and others on his team take pride in the fact that they developed Dashboard by simply pulling together all of the information that was already available to them on various internal databases. No additional expenses were incurred in its development.

"It's funny because other public and private organizations have been calling us, and they want to buy the software program for the Dashboard," Sorrell said. "There is no software program for sale."

The biggest challenge for the Dashboard was to get clean data.

"The Dashboard challenged the agency and the administrators to clean up the data within various systems and work through the rules," Rao said. "By the second week of December, we had the completed rules and data the way we wanted them, and presented the Dashboard to the Commissioner. He said he wanted to release this program to the public no later than the first quarter of 2003."

Henley, Baker and others who traveled around the state conducting Dashboard training had a challenge of their own -- the Dashboard was changing and evolving daily.

Nevertheless, in one month, Baker trained seven districts and 10 Central Office groups. The next objective was to get the Dashboard ready for

public view on the VDOT Web site.

"Dale and I were the ones who had to think about what it would be like for VDOT once the Dashboard was out there," Henley said. "We didn't want a citizen to call in to ask a question and have somebody say, 'The Dashboard? I don't know what you're talking about.'"

Baker credits district and central office public affairs staff for helping build awareness of the Dashboard among those not directly involved in it. Rao points to the Commissioner's reminders to employees about the importance of the project through e-mail and statewide monthly video conferences as critical to its success.

"There's no doubt about it," Rao said. "The success of this program is due to the Commissioner hooking into it. He has been a steadfast champion."

Now that the Dashboard has gone public, the Dashboard team is hardly resting on its laurels. There are big plans for the future. "We are working on many enhancements," Rao said. "Three new features we are working on are 'Map It,' 'Picture It' and 'Drive It.' Map It will provide a GIS map of the project area; Picture It will offer aerial photos; and Drive It will allow citizens to take a virtual drive on the new road."

Rao says he expects to have statewide pictures in hand by the end of this month for the Picture It feature, and the technology will be in place for Map It in the next 90 days. Drive It will take longer. "We have technology issues to work out. Internet connections for many people are too slow for these features," he said.

Meanwhile, the present Dashboard system is being scrutinized.

"We had a postmortem to talk about what we did right, what we did wrong, and what needs to be changed immediately," Henley said. "We're finding that the Dashboard is only as good as the information that is entered into the database. We found that some of the data entry was incorrect or wasn't being updated as quickly as possible, sometimes from the Central Office. That has revealed to us that some of our internal processes have the potential to change. Maybe the way we do business shouldn't be the way we do business. The Dashboard is an instrument for change."

[^ top](#)

MARCH- APRIL 2003



[Home](#) • [Contact the Editor](#) • [About the Bulletin](#) • [Archives](#) • [Print Version](#)

As highway construction season begins...

Work Zone Awareness Week reminds



April 6-12 is time for raising awareness about dangers to highway workers and motorists in work zones.

When you set the clocks forward, it's time to start preaching work zone awareness. VDOT will observe its sixth Work Zone Awareness Week April 6-12 by inviting motorists to take a "safety break" at 38 highway rest areas and by continuing its campaign urging young drivers to "Stay in the Picture".

DOTs around the country will observe the same week which originated in Virginia. The week of special safety emphasis coincides with the return to daylight savings time and beginning of the busiest time for building and repairing roads.

Also see:

- [Clever and effective work zone safety videos](#)
- [National Work Zone Awareness Week Poster](#)
- [Tech-Bytes article on research of crashes in work zones](#)

In Virginia, the week's emphasis is set against a backdrop of last year's grim work zone statistics: seven people killed and 343 people injured in 594 crashes across the state in 2002. The good news is that deaths are down 22 percent and injuries 13 percent over 2001.

Rest area breaks will be provided Friday, April 4, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. when VDOT employees will offer safety information and road maps to motorists as well as light refreshments. While highway construction remains one of the most dangerous jobs in America, four out of five people killed in work zones are motorists.

For most of VDOT, work zone safety is a year-round activity with employees continuing the "Stay in the Picture" educational effort with 18-24-year-old drivers; a group more prone to accidents than other age groups. One minute of inattention in a work zone can take a driver "out of the picture" for good, young people are told. VDOT has developed a safety kit to equip young drivers with information on what to do in a work zone and why. It fits in a vehicle's glove box and is distributed to driver's education teachers and to motorists who stop at rest stops.

At the national level, transportation-related organizations will convene April 8 from 10-11 a.m. at Freedom Plaza in Washington, D.C., for a program on work zone awareness and safety. Keynote speaker will be U.S. Rep. Jay Inslee (D-WA). Deputy Secretary of Transportation Pierce Homer will represent Virginia at the event. The message of the event, according to Homer, is that work zones "require the utmost attention of the driver."

Work zones are a fact of life in a society that takes good care of its transportation system. You will encounter one at least every 90 miles in Virginia. Gravel, dirt, mud, sudden changes in pavement and slope, potholes, narrow lanes, debris, harsh lighting, loud noises, big machines and traffic patterns that change from day to day all conspire to distract drivers in work zones. The best thing to do is to slow down, and pay attention to your driving. Put the cell phone away, leave the radio alone and concentrate! You are driving through somebody's work area, and there is no margin for error.

The Commonwealth of Virginia takes speeding in a highway work zone very seriously. Effective July 1, the law increases the fine for speeding in a highway work zone to up to \$500.

VDOT urges motorists of all ages to drive safely in highway work zones by following these safety tips:

- Expect the unexpected — a work zone can change overnight
- Dedicate your full attention to the roadway and those traveling around you
- Leave plenty of space between vehicles
- Obey posted speed limits
- Avoid changing lanes in a work zone
- Minimize distractions, such as changing radio stations

- Watch for flaggers and follow their directions
- Stay alert
- Be patient — highway workers are improving roads for your benefit

Work Zone Safety Videos



Play

"Stay in the Picture"
(MPG, 1.7MB)



Play

"Don't be a Potato"
(MPG, 1.7MB)

[^ top](#)

MARCH- APRIL 2003

bulletin

[Home](#) • [Contact the Editor](#) • [About the Bulletin](#) • [Archives](#) • [Print Version](#)

VDOT People

All in the Family

Bristol District

Bristol District Office: Congratulations to Lisa Salyers on her promotion to administrative and office specialist III for human resources, and to Mike Frye on his promotion to operations manager III in traffic engineering. Also promoted in traffic engineering was Mike Phipps, now architect-engineer I.

Lebanon Residency: Congratulations to Anthony Layne on his promotion to transportation operations manager I for the Big Rock AHQ.

Wytheville Residency: Congratulations to Larry Fitzgerald on his promotion to transportation operations manager II for the Baywood AHQ.

Central Office

Location and Design: **George Rogerson**, engineer senior, is serving as 2003 chairman of the Richmond Joint Engineers Council. In that office he will provide leadership for planning Engineers' Week, Engineering Career Day, other events, and scholarship programs. At VDOT, Rogerson guides four VDOT design teams as they prepare right of way and construction plans. He also manages consultant design projects. Rogerson was project manager for the Smart Road project in Montgomery County.



George Rogerson

Congratulations to **Barton Thrasher**, engineer I, and his wife, Sara, on the birth of a baby boy, Lucas Tanner! Also congratulations to **Larry Ricks**, engineer II, on his wedding to Alice VanLuyn!

Office of Health and Safety: **Howard Barnes**, assistant director, received a "Special Police Officer of the Year" award from Chesterfield County Police Department. Barnes serves on weekends and other times as a special police officer for the county. He was cited as a "shining star" for special police and as a "credit to the entire police department."



Howard Barnes

Culpeper District

Charlottesville Residency: Congratulations to Greg Cooley who has been promoted from engineer trainee to residency planner.

Louisa Residency: Bernard (Trey) Watkins and his wife, Cristi, have a new son, Charles Hasher. Watkins is a transportation operator at Zion Crossroads AHQ.

Warrenton Residency: District equipment shop manager Lindsay Walker has been promoted to assistant resident engineer here. Way to go, Mr. Walker!

Fredericksburg District

VDOT People

Names in the News

French is Lynchburg materials engineer

Kiser named Staunton construction engineer

Living our Values

Retirements

Obituaries

Bowling Green Residency: Congratulations to **Patricia Taylor** on her recent promotion to administrative office specialist III, responsible for accounting/ procurement at the Bowling Green Residency Office.

Hampton Roads District

Suffolk Residency: Congratulations to **D'Lorah Small**, inspector trainee, who at age 18 has just graduated from Old Dominion University with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering-and who plans to continue her education until she has earned a master's degree in engineering, a law degree, and a medical degree. Wow! Small has been featured in Jet magazine both for her current achievement and also four years earlier when she graduated from high school at age 14. Her mother realized she had a precocious child when D'Lorah spelled "cat" with magnetic letters at 18 months of age. By age three, she had an IQ at the genius level. She says, as quoted in Jet, "I am the first in my family to graduate from college, that was a big inspiration for them. And now I have inspired the people I work with to go back to school." Perhaps genius can actually rub off on others!



D'Lorah Small

Lynchburg District

Dillwyn Residency: Congratulations to **William R. Clements** on his promotion from transportation operator II on the Dillwyn sign crew to transportation operations manager I in the Dillwyn AHQ. Congratulations to **Brian Tyson**, bridge crew, and his wife on the birth of their first child, **Hunter Logan**. A farewell to **Troy Y. Kitchen** of the Andersonville AHQ. Kitchen has accepted the highway permits and subdivision specialist position at the Louisa Residency.

[^ top](#)

Staunton District



VDOT CPM, Wanda Welcher

District Office: Congratulations to **Wanda Welcher**, district procurement manager, who has earned a Lifetime Certified Purchasing Manager's (CPM) designation through the Institute for Supply Management. Welcher passed four modules of the CPM exam, completed continuing education units, and had to have at least 18 years of purchasing management experience to obtain the certification. Co-workers call her "a wealth of knowledge when it comes to state procurement laws." Her tireless commitment to researching contract language and requirements often makes the Staunton District a leader in innovative contracting methods.

Harrisonburg Residency: **Jacob Good**, equipment repair technician, and his wife, Erin, are due congratulations for a new daughter, Madison Faith, born prematurely in January. We also send best wishes now that Madison, who initially had a difficult time, is at home with her parents.

Lexington Residency: Robert T. Mays was promoted from operations manager I to operations manager II in the Millboro Springs AHQ. David W. Ingram was promoted from transportation operator II to operations manager I at the Millboro Springs AHQ. Congratulations to both!



Pictured during the visit to the Triangle AHQ are (from left) Bradlee Vess, Glenn Cooper, Danny Little, William "Moe" Tingler, Commissioner Shucet, Rodney Tingler, superintendent, Grover Nicely Jr., Nancy Nicely, John Jeffries Jr., Martha Campbell, and Jimmy White, resident engineer. Tom Sibold, supervisor, who was serving a customer, was unable to be in the photo.

Commissioner Shucet visited Triangle AHQ, Lexington Residency, recently in response to the invitation of Nancy Nicely, Triangle office and administrative services specialist. (See photo at left.)

Luray Residency: Samuel W. Good II was promoted from transportation operator II to operations manager I. With the promotion came a move from the McGaheysville AHQ in the Harrisonburg Residency to the Luray Sign Shop. Congratulations!

[^ top](#)

Names in the News

French is Lynchburg materials engineer

Harold D. "Don" French Jr., P.E., has been promoted to Lynchburg District materials engineer. French, former assistant district materials engineer, had been acting district materials engineer since the illness and subsequent death of W. W. "Dickie" Womack.

According to Dale H. Grigg Jr., P.E., district construction engineer, "We are fortunate to have someone of (Don's) caliber who was able to shoulder the load during a difficult time and is now in the official position of continuing the fine leadership and technical support that he has so aptly exemplified in the past."

French is a 1990 graduate of the University of Tennessee with a degree in civil engineering. He began his VDOT career in 1991 as an engineer trainee in the Materials Section of the Richmond District. Later that same year, he earned his PE licensure. He became an engineer senior and joined the Lynchburg District staff in 1997.

Kiser named Staunton construction engineer

Randy S. Kiser, PE, is Staunton District's new construction engineer. He succeeds Byron Coburn Jr. who now heads the department's Scheduling and Contract Development Division.

An Augusta County native, Kiser is a VDOT veteran of 15 years, including the past 11 as Luray resident engineer. The residency is responsible for all VDOT activities in Clarke, Page and Warren counties.

In his new role as district construction engineer, Kiser will oversee roadway planning, design, right of way acquisition, materials design, and construction.

A 1985 graduate of Virginia Tech with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering, Kiser began his VDOT career as an engineer trainee in the Staunton District's Lexington Residency. Following a year and a half in that post, he served as assistant resident engineer for three years at the Dillwyn Residency, Lynchburg District, before becoming resident engineer in Luray.

Our customers comment:

Living our Values

Virginians and motorists from other states often express their appreciation for VDOT employees' dedication and professionalism as they maintain and operate the Commonwealth's transportation system.

During the recent winter storms, citizens communicated their thanks for VDOTers' service many times. High praise also comes from Gov. Mark Warner who wrote, "In a year of record snowfall, much has been asked of VDOT employees, and on behalf of all Virginians, I thank you for your remarkable service. The professionalism and dedication with which you have served the Commonwealth are most worthy of recognition." Commissioner Philip Shucet commended employees for the "countless hours helping Virginians" to keep motoring and for their "extraordinary efforts."

Here are some representative commendations from citizens for VDOT work during the storms:

Northern Virginia District

Debbie Trimakas, Centreville, e-mails us: "...we moved here from Dayton, Ohio, five years ago. Your people have done a wonderful job clearing out the streets during these snowstorms that we have had. I drive along Route 29 going to work every day and I see your guys out there doing their work. Thanks."

Salem District

Terri Cox of Draper writes to Christiansburg Residency: "I am a wife, a mother, a sister, and a daughter. I want to thank all of you for all the hard work you have done and the long hours you've put in so that I could make it home to my family." Also, a very fortunate encounter between Wayne Watson, superintendent of Irving AHQ in Bedford Residency and a seven-year-old girl who was walking alone on snow-packed Route 460. It is reported that she was "dressed only in light clothes and sneakers. Watson stopped and talked with her and convinced her to warm up in his truck while he called the appropriate authorities. She was so cold that she could barely bend her knees to get into Watson's truck. It isn't known why she was out walking alone, but Watson might have saved her life."

Hampton Roads District

Employees did "an outstanding job clearing the roads in the five-city area of Norfolk, Portsmouth, Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, and Suffolk," writes Cynthia Perales. "I am sure they prevented many accidents as well. Give 'em a bonus!"

Fredericksburg District

A Spotsylvania resident, Ms. Lisa Bickham, writes: "I would like to say that the men and women who have been plowing the local roads have done an excellent job." And a Port Republic resident, David Storey, says: "Thank you very much for all your hard work during the weekend snow storm. I just wanted to let you know someone appreciates it."

Dillwyn Residency

Margaret V. Blackmon, superintendent of Prince Edward County Public Schools, wrote a letter to the editor regarding community cooperation during recent winter storms. She praised Bill King, supervisor at Green Bay AHQ, and John Chernault, supervisor at the Hampden_Sydney AHQ, and their crews, and "all of the folks" at VDOT. She was particularly appreciative that crews had pushed snow off the bus loops in front of the schools — in addition to clearing the county roads.

Staunton District

"Just an outstanding job was done by VDOT to get folks moving quickly and to provide needed access for emergencies," writes Bill Gardner to district employees.

Richmond District

Patti Taylor commends VDOTers: "I just wanted to tell you that you all have done a wonderful job with the last winter storm that blew through Richmond. I know that everyone worked and are working so hard to make it safe for people like me to get places safely. I know that each of the persons working long hours are making sacrifices."

Warrenton Residency

Thomas Rush of the Waterloo North Property Owners Association writes for the board of directors that "...it was unanimously agreed that your crew did a magnificent job of snow removal during last week's storm...We not only had early and rapid response to snow removal last Thursday, but the streets were plowed at least three times."

Bristol District

"Thanks to the VDOT employees who have worked so hard to keep the roads clear in Tazewell County. I travel Rte.460 and Rte. 19-460 from Raven to Tazewell every morning to get to work. I am very grateful for the excellent job done to make the roads safe to travel. A million THANKS !" writes Jane Ellen Horton.

^ top

Obituaries

- Joddy Baker, 52, admin. & office spec. II, Lebanon Residency, died Jan. 23; she had two years of service.
- Dennis Barksdale, 52, admin. & prog. spec. III, Chatham Residency, died Feb. 20; retired in 2001 with 24 years of service.
- Willie F. Berry, 54, transportation operator II, Bowling Green Residency, died March 18; he had seven years of service.
- Harry B. Burner, 82, equip. oper. A, Edinburg Residency, died Feb. 17; retired in 1986 with 32 years of service.
- Robert J. James, 78, equip. oper. A, Culpeper Residency, died March 1; retired in 1988 with 15 years of service.
- William H. Johnson, 81, equip. oper. A, Louisa Residency, died Feb. 8; retired in 1983 with 26 years of service.
- Calvin E. Mattox, 66, L & D engineer, Staunton Dist., died Jan. 1; retired in 1995 with 40 years of service.
- Cariker McErwin, 66, traffic tech. supv., Staunton Dist., died Dec. 27; retired in 1991 with 29 years of service.
- Virginia B. Tribble, 84, switchboard oper. A, Culpeper Dist., died Feb. 8; retired in 1980 with 17 years of service.
- Clifton W. Weaver, 84, equip. oper. A, Culpeper Residency, died March 18; retired in 1983 with 13 years of service.
- Luther L. Withrow, 71, mechanic A, Bowling Green Residency, died March 22; retired in 1994 with 21 years of service.
- Ollie Moses Wright Jr., 60, employment manager, Central Office, died Feb. 26; he was employed at VDOT from 1969 until 1982.
- Rawley D. Yeatts Jr., 78, assistant district engineer, Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, died March 31; retired in 1988 with 46 years of service.

^ top

Retirements

Don P.Akers, oper. mgr. II, Sandston Residency, 38 years.
Preston L. Aldridge Jr., eng. tech. III, Richmond District, 38 years.
Linda H. Asbell, info. tech. mgr. I, Hampton Roads District, 30 years.
James D. Austin, arch. engr. mgr. II, Right of Way Division, 30 years.
Willie Caison Jr., transp. oper. II, Franklin Residency, 25 years.
Levi M. Cary, prog. admin. mgr. III, Equal Opportunity Division, 32 years.
Joan S. Chappell, land acq. agent II, Hampton Roads Dist., 30 years.
W. B. Childress, transp. oper. II, Halifax Residency, 30 years.
Lawrence J. Clay, eng. tech. III, Richmond District, 36 years.
Lawrence E. Cope, transp. oper. mgr. I, Jonesville Residency, 30 years.
Franklin W. Davis, transp. oper. mgr. I, Charlottesville Residency, 29 years.
R. H. Duke, eng. tech. III, Suffolk Residency, 41 years.
Thomas W. Ford Jr., arch.engr. mgr. II, Right of Way Division, 32 years.
R. A. Garrett, arch. engr. mgr. I, Lebanon Residency, 35 years.
Nancy I. Gibson, financial svcs. spec. I, Culpeper District, 6 years.
Robert J. Gibson, arch. engr. mgr. II, Culpeper District, 46 years.
Reuben Grant, transp. oper. II, Franklin Residency, 15 years.
Howard C. Hager Jr., transp. oper. mgr. II, Sandston Residency, 9 years.
D. R. Holsinger, land acq. agent III, Right of Way Division, 38 years.
John W. Jenkins Jr., eng. tech. III, Culpeper District, 35 years.
Nancy C. Kagey, admin. and office spec. III, Construction Division, 15 years.
Michael R. Kodenski, equip. repair tech. I, Martinsville Residency, 28 years.

William N. Lambert, computer oper. mgr. I, Data Mgt. Division, 34 years.
G. E. Madison, transp. oper. mgr. II, Lexington Residency, 36 years.
John T. Martin, transp. oper. II, Martinsville Residency, 29 years.
Clarence N. Mullins, transp. oper. II, Manassas Residency, 15 years.
Floyd W. Palmore Jr., info. tech. spec. III, Data Mgt. Division, 36 years.
R Rhoton, transp. oper. II, Jonesville Residency, 33 years.
Edward J. Seitz, arch/eng. I, Northern Va. District, 10 years.
Ernest A. Shifflett, transp. oper. II, Harrisonburg Residency, 15 years.
Ernest W. Smith, eng. tech. III, South Hill Residency, 27 years.
George L. Stanford Jr., land acq. mgr. I, Right of Way Division, 34 years.
L. L. Stephenson, human resource analyst I, Hampton Roads District, 36 years.
Everett J. Terry, transp. oper. II, Harrisonburg Residency, 10 years.
Clarence A. Thompson, transp. oper. II, South Hill Residency, 25 years.
Stanley L. Thompson, oper. mgr. I, Halifax Residency, 27 years.
Henry G. Warren Jr., land acq. agent II, Hampton Roads District, 33 years.
Vicki W. Willis, info. tech. spec. I, Info. Tech. Division,
June L. Whitley, info. tech. spec. II, Info. Tech. Division, 34 years.
Gary L. Yowell, arch.-eng. mgr. I, Northern Va. District, 29 years.

Please note:

In the last edition, two Bristol District retirees' years of service were incorrect. **Harold L. Ball's** should be corrected to **29** years. **Sam J. Henry's** should be **18** years.

[^ top](#)

MARCH- APRIL 2003

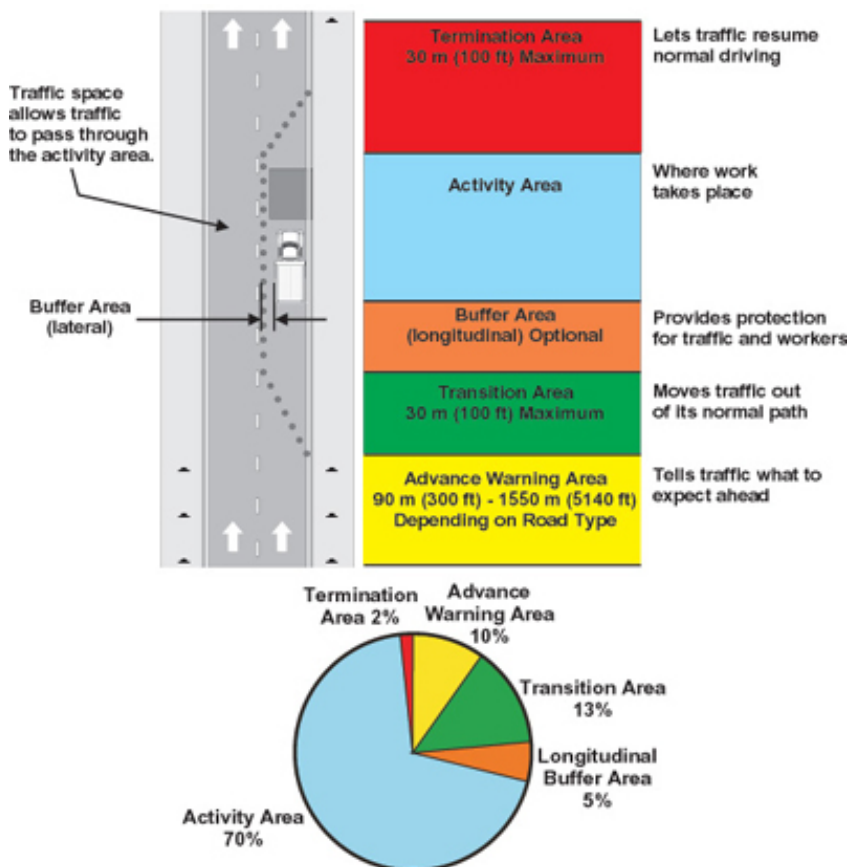


[Home](#) • [Contact the Editor](#) • [About the Bulletin](#) • [Archives](#) • [Print Version](#)

Tech-Bytes

Speed variations are major cause of work zone crashes

Rear-end collisions cause the preponderance of work zone crashes in Virginia, indicating that a high variance in vehicle speeds is the major cause of accidents in work zones, according to a VDOT-sponsored study.



Nick Garber and Ming Zhao, conducting the study for VDOT's Research Council, also confirmed what many VDOTers might have surmised--the potential for severe crashes is greater within a work zone than outside one. According to their findings: "The proportion of fatal crashes was higher in work zones, as was the proportion of multiple-vehicle crashes."

Garber, professor of engineering at the University of Virginia, and Zhao, a former graduate research assistant, examined almost 1,500 police crash records. They noted that most crashes occurred in the "activity area," or locations where the roadwork was being done. The "termination" area of the work zone, where motorists resume normal driving speeds, had the fewest crashes.

Another finding was that the type of crashes was different from daytime to nighttime, with more fixed-object crashes and fewer angle and rear-end crashes during night hours. Also noted was an increase in sideswipe crashes of vehicles traveling in the same direction as they moved from "advanced warning" areas to "transition" areas where traffic merges because of lane reductions.

Among recommendations from the researchers:

- Use changeable message signs with radar units as speed control devices in work zones to reduce rear-end crashes;
- Implement more effective strategies to separate traffic and the work area to reduce crashes and also pedestrian fatalities;
- Study lighting in work zones, the visibility of channelizing devices, and the effects of alcohol to determine causes of nighttime crashes; and
- Study signing procedures that will encourage early merging to reduce sideswipe crashes.

The full report of the study can be found at:

<http://www.virginiadot.org/vtrc/briefs/02-r12rb/default.htm>

^ [top](#)

About the Bulletin

We Keep Virginia Moving



An employee newspaper published by the
Virginia Department of Transportation
Office of Public Affairs
1401 E. Broad Street Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 786-5731 (TTY only, 711)

Contact Us

Commissioner: Philip A. Shucet
Public Affairs Director: Lynda J. South
Editor: Charles M. Armstrong
Photo Coordination: Tom Saunders
Layout & Design: Cynthia Brown

[^ top](#)

Central Office PE Required Positions

Role Title	Work Title (if applicable)
Commissioner's Staff	
Arch/Engring Mgr III	Chief Engineer for Program Development
Arch/Engring Mgr III	Chief Engineer of Operations
Construction Management	
Arch/Engring Mgr III	Division Administrator
Arch/Engring Mgr II	Assistant Division Administrator
Arch/Engring Mgr II	Assistant Division Administrator
Arch/Engring Mgr II	Assistant Division Administrator
Arch/Engring Mgr II	Assistant Division Administrator
Asset Management	
Arch/Engring Mgr II	Pavement Engineer
Architect/Engineer II	Bridge Engineer
Architect/Engineer I	Data Collection Engineer
Location & Design	
Arch/Engring Mgr III	Division Administrator
Arch/Engring Mgr II	Assistant Division Administrator
Arch/Engring Mgr II	Assistant Division Administrator
Arch/Engring Mgr II	Assistant Division Administrator
Architect/Engineer II	State Hydraulics Engineer
Architect/Engineer I	Assistant State Hydraulics Engineer
Architect/Engineer I	Assistant State Hydraulics Engineer
Architect/Engineer I	Assistant State Hydraulics Engineer
Architect/Engineer II	Urban & Freeway Design Program/TEPS
Architect/Engineer I	Urban & Freeway Design Program/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Urban & Freeway Design Program/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Urban & Freeway Design Program/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer II	Interstate & Prim. Design Program/TEPS
Architect/Engineer I	Interstate & Prim. Design Program/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Interstate & Prim. Design Program/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer II	Engineering Services Program/TEPS
Architect/Engineer I	Engineering Services Program/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Engineering Services Program/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer II	Traffic Engineering Services Design/TEPS
Architect/Engineer II	Engineering Coordination Program/TEPS
Architect/Engineer I	Engineering Coordination Program/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Engineering Coordination Program/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Engineering Coordination Program/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer II	PPTA/Special Projects Program/TEPS
Architect/Engineer II	Public Involvement/Special Studies/TEPS
Architect/Engineer I	Engineering Services Program/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Traffic Engineering Services Design/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Traffic Engineering Services Design/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Public Involvement/Special Studies/TE Senior
Materials	

Central Office PE Required Positions

Role Title	Work Title (if applicable)
Arch/Engring Mgr III	Division Administrator
Arch/Engring Mgr II	Assistant Division Administrator
Arch/Engring Mgr II	Assistant Division Administrator
Arch/Engring Mgr II	Assistant Division Administrator
Arch/Engring Mgr II	Assistant Division Administrator
Architect/Engineer II	Concrete Engineering Program Manager
Architect/Engineer II	Asphalt Concrete Program Engineer
Architect/Engineer II	Pavement Program Engineer
Architect/Engineer II	Geotechnical Engineering Program Manager
Architect/Engineer II	Structural Mat'ls Engineering Program Manager
Architect/Engineer II	Chief Transportation Geologist
Structure & Bridge	
Arch/Engring Mgr III	Division Administrator
Arch/Engring Mgr II	Assistant Division Administrator
Arch/Engring Mgr II	Assistant Division Administrator
Arch/Engring Mgr II	Assistant Division Administrator
Arch/Engring Mgr II	Assistant Division Administrator
Architect/Engineer II	Structural Engineer Supervisor/TEPS
Architect/Engineer II	Structural Engineer Supervisor/TEPS
Architect/Engineer II	Structural Engineer Supervisor/TEPS
Architect/Engineer II	Structural Engineer Supervisor/TEPS
Architect/Engineer II	Structural Engineer Supervisor/TEPS
Architect/Engineer II	Structural Engineer Supervisor/TEPS
Architect/Engineer II	Structural Engineer Supervisor/TEPS
Architect/Engineer II	Bridge Safety Inspection Program Supv./TEPS
Trans. Engineer Senior	Senior Structural Engineer/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Senior Structural Engineer/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Senior Structural Engineer/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Senior Geotechnical Engineer/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Senior Structural Engineer/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Senior Structural Engineer/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Senior Structural Engineer/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Senior Structural Engineer/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Senior Structural Engineer/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Senior Geotechnical Engineer/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Senior Structural Engineer/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Senior Structural Engineer/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Senior Structural Engineer/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer I	Senior Structural Engineer/TE Senior
Architect/Engineer II	Structural Engineer Supervisor/TEPS
Right of Way & Utilities	
Arch/Engring Mgr II	State Utilities Engineer
Transportation Research Council	
Scientist Manager II	Associate Director/Pavement & Structures

Central Office PE Required Positions

Role Title	Work Title (if applicable)
Scientist Manager II	Associate Director/Materials
Scientist III	Research Scientist Sr./Pavement & Structure
Scientist III	Research Scientist Sr./Pavement & Structure
Scientist III	Research Scientist Sr./Pavement & Structure
Scientist III	Principal Research Scientist/Materials
Scientist III	Principal Research Scientist/Materials
Scientist III	Principal Research Scientist/Materials
Scientist III	Trans. Research Scientist Sr.
Scientist III	Trans. Research Scientist Sr.
Scientist III	Trans. Research Scientist Sr.
Scientist III	Trans. Research Scientist Sr.
Scientist III	Trans. Research Scientist Sr.
Mobility Management	
Arch/Engring Mgr III	Division Administrator
Arch/Engring Mgr II	Assistant Division Administration
Arch/Engring Mgr II	Assistant Division Administration
Arch/Engring Mgr II	Assistant Division Administration
Arch/Engring Mgr II	Assistant Division Administration
Architect/Engineer II	Specifications/Standards Program Manager
Architect/Engineer II	Systems Analysis Program Manager
Architect/Engineer II	Highway Systems Program Manager
Architect/Engineer II	Safety Program Manager
Architect/Engineer II	Safety Studies Program Manager
Architect/Engineer II	Systems Analysis Manager
Architect/Engineer II	Systems Analysis Manager
Scheduling and Contract Development	
Arch/Engring Mgr III	Division Administrator
Arch/Engring Mgr II	Assistant Division Administrator
Architect/Engineer I	Estimates & Bids Engineer
Total Positions PE Required	

National Work Zone Awareness Week

April 6 - 12, 2003

Each of these cones represents a life lost in a highway work zone annually -

Four out of Five Are Motorists.

Don't add to the numbers - Stay Alert and Obey the Speed Limit!

National Work Zone

Awareness Week



Your Safety & Health Leader for 90 Years



Sponsored By:



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration



Occupational Safety and Health Administration

